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AUTHOR Barthlow, Robert L.
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ABSTRACT

The academic-standards policy of the community college is often inconsistent with the open-door admissions policy. A large number of community colleges still used a fixed Grade Point Average (GPA) standard when determining academic standing. Would it not be sounder educational policy to use a developmental system of GPA requirements in determining probation and dismissal? A possible model for academic probation is: .80 by completion of 12 semester hours; 1.20 by completion of 24 semester hours; 1.50 by completion of 36 semester hours; 1.80 by completion of 48 semester hours; and 2.00 by completion of 60 semester hours. A student who falls below these standards would automatically be placed on scholastic probation until the next category of semester hours is reached. Only under very unusual circumstances would a student be allowed to remain on probation for a third successive semester. Of what value is it, either to the student or to society, to admit a student who needs academic assistance and place him on probation before he has had time to become stronger academically? The community college cannot fulfill its philosophy properly if it does not feel free to develop techniques and policies that enhance its philosophy. (DB)

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GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND ACADEMIC PROBATION IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

Robert L. Barthlow

One of the highly publicized aspects of the philosophy of the community college is the open door admissions policy which enables students to enter the college regardless of their past academic achievement. The assumption is that the students who need academic assistance will have the opportunity to develop their academic skills. However, a glaring inconsistency can still be found in many of the two-year colleges. The policy concerning academic standards of retention is often not consistent with the open door admissions policy. A survey of the academic probation policy of 43 community colleges is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Comparison of a Number of Two-Year Colleges and Their Systems of Academic Probation

Colleges requiring a 2.0 GPA to be in good standing	21
Colleges using a developmental GPA based on number of credits completed	22
Total number colleges reviewed	43

The sample shows that a considerable number of community colleges still use a fixed GPA standard when determining academic standing.

JC 740 339

The concept of placing students on probation if the grade point average is below 2.00 is a carry-over from the senior college model. If the community college gives a student the chance to develop himself academically, doesn't it follow that this improvement will, in most cases, be developmental? If this is true, then would it not be sounder educational policy to employ a developmental system of grade point average requirements in determining probation and dismissal?

A possible model for academic probation could be as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

.80 by the time 12 semester hours have been completed.
1.20 by the time 24 semester hours have been completed.
1.50 by the time 36 semester hours have been completed.
1.80 by the time 48 semester hours have been completed.
2.00 by the time 60 semester hours have been completed.

A student who falls below these standards will automatically be placed on scholastic probation until the next category of semester hours is reached. If the cumulative grade point average appropriate to that category of completed semesters has been attained, the student is removed from scholastic probation; however, if the appropriate cumulative grade has not been attained, the student, at the discretion of the Academic Standard Committee, will be either placed on continued probation or dismissed from the College. Except under very unusual circumstances, no student will be allowed to remain on probation for a third successive semester.

If the community college is to fulfill one of its most important missions, its academic policies must be supportive of that mission. Of what value, either to the student or to society, is it to admit a student who needs academic assistance and then place him on probation before he has had time to become academically stronger?

Some community colleges have mistakenly followed many of the traditional methods of higher education to prove that they are just as "good" as the senior institutions. The community college cannot fulfill properly its philosophy if it does not feel free to develop techniques and policies which enhance its philosophy. The end product -- the quality of its graduates -- should be the measure by which the community college presents itself for evaluation as a postsecondary institution and not the similarity of its internal policies with senior institutions.

(Dr. Robert L. Barthlow is Vice President for Academic Affairs, Lehigh County Community College, Schrecksville, Pennsylvania.)

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